



STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**FOR THE NATIONAL SCHOOL
OF JUDGES OF UKRAINE**

FOR 2014 – 2018

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APPROVED

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1. INTRODUCTION

Preparing highly qualified and conscientious professionals to work in the Ukrainian judicial system is a task of importance for the entire country, guaranteeing that justice is better administered, society has more trust in the judiciary, and Ukraine's image abroad is improved.

In the aim of achieving this goal the Ukrainian Law "On the Judiciary and Status of Judges" was passed in 2010, providing for a separate judicial school – the National School of Judges of Ukraine (NSJU), which was created on December 21, 2010 from the Academy of Judges of Ukraine (Order № 822/4-3П of the Ukrainian High Qualifications Commission of Judges on 12.21.2010).

Article 81 of the Ukrainian Law on the "Judicial System and Status of Judges" states: **"The National School of Judges of Ukraine is a state institution with special status that prepares highly qualified professionals to work in the judicial system and carries out scholarly and academic research."**

According to Article 82 of the Ukrainian "Judicial System and Status of Judges" Law, **The National School of Judges shall:**

- 1) organize special training for judicial nominees;
- 2) provide training to judges:
 - ✓ who have been appointed for the first time;
 - ✓ who have been nominated for indefinite terms;
 - ✓ who have been assigned to court administrative positions;
- 3) periodic advanced vocational training for judges to improve professional skills;
- 4) training for court administrative staff;
- 5) scholarly research on improving the justice system;
- 6) reviewing international practices in court management;
- 7) training and instructional materials for general trial courts, the High Qualification Commissions of Judges of Ukraine, and the High Council of Justice.

The National School of Judges of Ukraine includes 8 regional divisions: in Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Lviv, Odessa, Sevastopol, Kharkiv, Chernivtsy, and the

Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Additionally, the institution has several advisory bodies, including:

- ✓ Scientific and Methodological Board of the National School of Judges of Ukraine – a consultative and advisory body to the NSJU, formed to guide the NSJU’s research activities;
- ✓ Administration of the National School of Judges of Ukraine – the continuously functioning management arm of the institution responsible for regular decision-making on educational, research, human resources, and financial and managerial issues which require joint discussion within the National School of Judges of Ukraine;
- ✓ Judicial Coordination Centre – a consultative body functioning on the basis of voluntary civic participation and collective decision-making that provides the community of judges an input into formulating content for standard curricula for judges and court administrators and curricular for special training of judicial nominees.

The National School of Judges of Ukraine maintains an official website to keep the public abreast of its activities and publishes four issues of its own national research and methods periodical, the “Word of the National School of Judges of Ukraine.” The journal is intended for judges, judicial agencies employees, Prosecutor General’s Office employees, paralegals, practicing lawyers, and teachers and students of university-level colleges of law.

Top government officials’ attention has been fixed on the activity of the National School of Judges, as witnessed by the Ukrainian President’s annual Address to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “On Ukraine’s Internal and External State of Affairs in 2012,” given on 07.03.2012, in which the Head of the State stressed the need to amend Ukraine’s Law “On the Judicial System and Status of Judges,” granting authority to train judges solely to the National School of Judges of Ukraine.

“Professionalism and Its Continual Improvement” is strategic goal №6 of the Ukrainian Judicial Branch’s Strategic Growth Plan for 2013-2015 and at the same

time quite a challenging aim. It is therefore that the school of judges is called upon to provide proper professional skills to judges.

The National School of Judges of Ukraine's Strategic Development Plan for 2014 – 2018 is a long-range plan based on intermediate goals that the National School of Judges of Ukraine has identified based on the development strategy for the judicial branch in Ukraine. Achieving the plan's strategic goals and focus areas will serve as an impulse for development of the school's activities in the judicial sector, use of international best practices, and improvement of administration.

For the present, the goal is strengthening the role of the National School of Judges of Ukraine in preparing highly qualified and conscientious professionals for the judicial system.

2. MISSION, VISION, VALUES

The National School of Judges of Ukraine's mission, its vision for the future, and the values it espouses are a type of compass for its growth. This compass helps guide the decision-making process and resultant efforts in the right direction.

Mission Statement

The National School of Judges of Ukraine's mission is to create a professional workforce for Ukraine's judicial system able to effectively exercise judicial powers, help consolidate rule of law in Ukraine, and make Ukraine a law-based, democratic state.

Vision for the Future

The National School of Judges of Ukraine is a judicial education institution that lives up to international standards, meets the national demand for staffing of courts, and is a strong teaching and academic research Centre for educating highly qualified and conscientious specialists, while developing and implementing innovative educational methods.

Studying at the National School of Judges of Ukraine is a matter of prestige, while teaching at the school is a distinguished, honored endeavor for each judge.

Core Values

Core Values, in the conceptual meaning of the term, are guideposts along the path to accomplishing the National School of Judges of Ukraine's mission and vision for the future, which dictate the NSJU's approach to its students, colleagues, and partners.

Core values
include:



3. ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF JUDGES OF UKRAINE IN ORDER TO SELECT A DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The NSJU analyzed the institute's activities in order to assess progress, form a holistic view of the institution and its goals, set priorities for effective use of our strengths, and to align the National School of Judges of Ukraine's development path with changes taking place in the environment. This analysis is an intermediate step between defining the institute's mission, vision, and core values on the one hand, and setting priorities for development and concrete strategic goals on the other. As a result of the analysis we were able to determine strengths and weaknesses, which are the basis for generating and forming a clear strategy for the National School of Judges of Ukraine.

CRITERIA	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Legal Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NSJU's legal status, functions, and tasks assigned under the Ukrainian Law "On the Judicial System and Status of Judges". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regarding special training for nominees, NSJU is authorized only to organize training; - provided by Law system for business trips to the NSJU for teaching requires adjustment to work properly.
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2013 the NSJU received its own office space in Kyiv. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The building in Kyiv is not intended for educational purposes, while regional divisions do not have their own offices; - excessive wear on materials, equipment, and office machines.
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly qualified management team; - devoted, enthusiastic employees who understand the institute's policies and strategic growth priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some associates only work to solve current tasks without giving regard to how the solution accords with the NSJU's goals and tasks; - the professional skills and knowledge of some employees needs improvement for them to work effectively as part of the team; - NSJU lacks experts in certain fields (psychologists, etc.).
Development and delivery of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gradual introduction of interactive learning methods; - the number of educational events in 2012 grew by almost four times compared to 2011. A similar trend has continued for the nine months of work in 2013; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NSJU has a huge work load related to training judges, judicial nominees, and court administrative staff; - judges aren't interested in teaching at the NSJU due to being overloaded from their main duties to hear cases; specialists with teaching

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the number of teaching judges who know modern teaching methods for adult audiences is growing; - trusted and reliable partners (law schools, international technical assistance programs). 	<p>experience are uninterested in teaching due to the low pay;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low likelihood of having justices from the Ukrainian Supreme Court and higher specialized courts participate in teaching at regional divisions of the NSJU.
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The institute has a sufficient level of funding to hold special training for judicial nominees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The level of funding projected to meet short-term goals such as business trips, improving materials and equipment for National School of Judges of Ukraine employees and educational tasks is insufficient; - lack of own classrooms, while lacking the financial resources to rent such premises.
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Innovation-oriented team that generates ideas and creates an environment for trying out innovative teaching methods for professional training of judges, judicial nominees, and court administrative staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of resources makes it impossible to fully realize innovative ideas.
Work with the Public	<p>Official NSJU website and printed publication “Word of the National School of Judges of Ukraine”.</p>	<p>Other institutes and organizations are not very aware of the NSJU, the principles of our work, and thus, there are little chances for collaboration.</p>

4. GROWTH PRIORITIES FOR THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF JUDGES OF UKRAINE DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1. Prepare highly qualified professionals for work in the judicial system

Preparation of highly qualified and conscientious professionals to work in Ukraine's judicial system should encourage the growth of professionalism, competency, independence, fairness, and objectiveness of judges – the very qualities necessary for rule of law and the defense of personal liberties and human rights in the legal process on par with European standards. Such training is important for the entire country, guaranteeing that justice is better administered, Ukraine's international authority is strengthened, and our state's justice system enjoys a positive reputation.

Evolution and modernization of judicial education must be an on-going effort, react quickly to changes in court practice, and incorporate best practices of international legal institutions, particularly the European Court of Human Rights.

With this goal in mind the National School of Judges of Ukraine has identified tasks that are core to increasing the quality of education for judges, judicial nominees, and court administrative staff.

Task 1. Develop national standards for professional education.

Developing national standards for professional education of nominated justices, increasing the professional skills and knowledge of judges, and educating court administrative staff.

Taking these standards into account in creating and introducing curricula for judges and court staff, grading systems, teacher requirements, etc., particularly for special training programmes for court staff managers, software instruction, ethics courses, etc.

Task 2. Early personal planning for judge and court staff training

Incorporation of electronic registration of students for training courses.

Creation and regular updates to the National School of Judges of Ukraine's database of student judges.

Task 3. Application of Advanced Teaching Methods

Improving two-way communication with students of the National School of Judges of Ukraine in order to create course curricula and programmes that are maximally tailored to the needs of judges and court administrative staff.

A gradual move away from lecture-based studies toward more interactive forms (practical and training seminars, conferences, training sessions, mock training trials, small group work, role-playing exercises, etc.).

Introduction of modern educational methods such, especially e-learning, video conferencing, etc.

Task 4. Creating a highly qualified team of teachers

Increasing the prestige of teaching at the National School of Judges of Ukraine.

Creation of a register of teachers that will contain information on judges, retired judges, and scholars with extensive teaching experience.

Improving the work-related travel mechanism for judges to visit the National School of Judges of Ukraine to teach.

Selecting teachers with the most professional experience on a competitive basis.

Holding events designed to advance the professional skills and level of teachers at the National School of Judges of Ukraine.

Goal 2. Research

Given the provisions of the National School of Judges of Ukraine's Research Strategy for 2011-2015, the main tasks for advancing academic and research work of the institute were identified in conformance with the best international examples for effective use of the research potential of associates of the National School of Judges of Ukraine.

Task 1. Advancing scholarly research

1.1. Priority areas

Determine priorities for advancing scholarly research according to the judicial system's needs.

Research issues and provide recommendations on creation of a state-run program to develop scholarly legal research in judiciary field. Look for and analyze other state-run research program related to the National School of Judges of Ukraine's research interests and strive to involve the National School of Judges in their realization.

1.2. Goal Orientation

Make sure that research conducted by at National School of Judges of Ukraine is practical, innovative, and oriented toward the needs of the judicial system and demands for training judges and nominees (educational demands).

1.3. Academic Potential

Strengthen the academic potential of the National School of Judges of Ukraine by involving scholars who are experts in their fields in research work and cooperating with other academic research institutions, judges, and other judicial agencies in Ukraine.

Improve collaboration with foreign institutions to exchange information and experience in conducting scholarly research in the legal field.

Task 2. Scientific Methods Board

Increase the role and importance of the Scientific Methods Board of the National School of Judges of Ukraine as the body responsible for setting research priorities for the judicial system; organizing, planning, and coordinating methodological and research work at the National School of Judges of Ukraine; assisting in conducting research and helping judicial bodies put research results to practical use.

Task 3. Digital Library as a Single Informational and Consulting Resource

To improve the methodological framework for justice system professionals and give timely, targeted assistance in solving pressing enforcement issues faced by the courts, a digital library must be created as a single informational and consulting resource, along with a centre or group of consultants selected from research associates and experienced judges teaching at the National School of Judges of Ukraine.

Task 4. Journal “Word of the National School of Judges of Ukraine”

Raise the status of the national research and methods periodical “Word of the National School of Judges of Ukraine” by placing it amongst the List of Professional Research Publications in Ukraine. Increase the publication’s circulation.

Goal 3. Organizational and institutional development of the School

Organizational and institutional development of the National School of Judges of Ukraine’s will involve qualitative changes and adjustments to the school’s organizational structure and business management system, increased operating effectiveness based on adopting and implementing modern management solutions, improved materials, facilities and equipment, and better work management in all divisions and offices, aimed at meeting the judiciary’s needs for quality educational services and scholarly research.

Task 1. HR Policy

Guide the professional development of the National School of Judges of Ukraine’s employees. Create a professional continuing career development/advanced skills training system.

Involve as many judges with extensive professional experience and judges with degrees and academic titles as possible in teaching.

Create an active employee applicant pool to ensure that all elements of the institute function as a single mechanism.

Task 2. Financing

Strive to increase funding for the National School of Judges of Ukraine and create appropriate financial conditions to support the institute's growth and achievement of its strategic goals.

Seek appropriation of needed funds from the Ukrainian state budget to help with construction of facilities with enough classroom space for training and repair of existing office space; look for other non-government sources of increased funding.

Task 3. Legal Support

Initiate amending the Law of Ukraine on the Judiciary and Status of Judges with the aim of increasing the status of the National School of Judges of Ukraine and improving the mechanism of special training of judicial candidates.

Revise the abovementioned Law by vesting the authority to conduct full-time judicial training in the National School of Judges of Ukraine and not in educational establishments subordinated to the executive branch of power. Law schools should be engaged in such training instead.

Increase the term of special training of judicial candidates from six to eighteen months in order to ensure adequate theoretical and practical training.

Set the amount of scholarship paid to judicial candidates during special training to a reasonable level.

Improve the mechanism of assessing the level of theoretical and practical knowledge of judicial candidates after their completion of special training. This involves introducing the assessment of theoretical knowledge and professional qualifications of a candidate instead of the existing qualifications exam. Such assessment should be brought under the purview of the National School of Judges of Ukraine.

Increase the National School of Judges of Ukraine's status by drafting a Law "On the National School of Judges of Ukraine" and lobbying for its passage.

Task 4. Social Benefits and Infrastructure

In order to achieve the National School of Judges of Ukraine's principal goal of training employees for judicial agencies, the problem of proper office space in the central office in Kyiv and regional divisions of the National School of Judges of Ukraine needs to be resolved.

Equip facilities with necessary equipment to use interactive learning methods, e-learning, etc.

Support the operation of Judge Training Centers of the National School of Judges of Ukraine at the state-owned Femida Sanatorium and Health Resort and state-owned Shklo Sanatorium and Health Resort.

Resolve the problem of providing paid housing for employees of National School of Judges of Ukraine, who need improved living conditions under current law.

Improve materials and equipment available to employees of the National School of Judges of Ukraine by replacing outdated equipment and equipping workplaces with necessary furniture and office appliances.

In order to create an intranet, software needs to be updated to allow innovative projects to be put in place: proprietary e-learning courses, and creation of a Single Digital Network for the National School of Judges of Ukraine to help support planning and exchange of information, etc.